Claim Amendments

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Please amend "*Claims*" to "We claim:"

Claims 1-13 (Canceled).

14. (New) A method of enhancing safety of a stairlift installation comprising a rail extending between upper end and lower ends of a staircase, a carriage moveable along the rail, and carriage operating controls remote from the carriage, the method comprising: providing a proximity sensor to disable the carriage operating control when a person is proximate the carriage.

15. (New) The method of claim 14, in which providing the proximity sensor comprises mounting the proximity sensor proximate the carriage.

16. (New) The method of claim 14, in which a chair is mounted on the carriage, and the method further comprises providing an occupancy sensor to sense when a load is applied to the chair.

17. (New) The method of claim 16, in which the chair is foldable, the method further comprising providing a sensor to sense when the chair is folded.

18. (New) A stairlift assembly, comprising a rail extending between an upper and lower end of a staircase; a carriage moveable along the rail; and carriage operating controls remote from the carriage; the assembly comprising: a proximity sensor to sense the proximity of a person to the carriage and to render the carriage operation controls inoperative in response to sensing the proximity of the person.

19. (New) The assembly of claim 18, in which the proximity sensor is mounted proximate the carriage.

20. (New) The assembly of claim 18, further comprising a chair mounted on the carriage, and in which at least part of the proximity sensor being mounted on the chair.

21. (New) The assembly of claim 20, further comprising an occupancy sensor to detect presence of a user seated in the chair.

22. (New) The assembly of claim 21, in which the occupancy sensor comprises a load sensor to sense load on a chair base.

23. (New) The assembly of claim 20, in which the chair is foldable, the assembly further comprising a position sensor to sense when the chair is folded.

24. (New) The assembly of claim 18, in which the proximity sensor is a capacitance type proximity sensor.

25. (New) A stairlift assembly including: a rail; a carriage movably mounted on the rail; a chair mounted on the carriage; at least one user operable control to cause movement of the carriage along the rail; and an occupancy sensor to sense the presence of a user seated in the chair and to activate the user operable control only when a user is seated in the chair.

26. (New) The assembly of claim 25, in which the occupancy sensor comprises a load sensor, incorporated in the chair, operable to sense load applied by a user seated in the chair.

27. (New) The assembly of claim 25, in which the occupancy sensor comprises a load sensor, incorporated in the carriage, operable to sense load applied by a user seated in the chair.